

# On 'Not Bearing False Witness' about Our Muslim Neighbors

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**Wk 1:**  
Barriers to Understanding  
Our Muslim Neighbors





**As-salaamu alaykum!**

(Peace be with you!)

**Wa alaykum as-salaam!**

(And to you, also, peace!)

**Bismallah  
ar-Rahman, ar-Rahim...**



**In the Name of God,  
the Compassionate,  
the Merciful...**

# 1 "The Opening" (Al-Fatiha)

In the name of God [alone],

the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Praise be to God,

Lord of the worlds,

the Compassionate, the Merciful,

Master of the Day of Judgment.

You [alone] we worship

and from You [alone] we seek help.

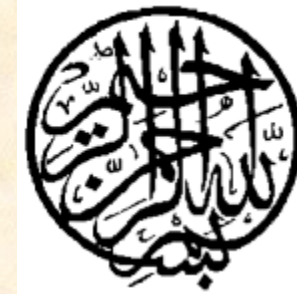
Guide us upon the straight path,

the path of those whom You have blessed,

not [the path] of those who incur wrath,

nor [the path] of those who are astray.

(SQ translation, modified)



Opening  
sura (chapter)  
of the Qur'an

17x / day

Somewhat the  
Islamic  
equivalent of  
the Christian  
Lord's Prayer



# Islam: 2nd largest religion in world (~22%)

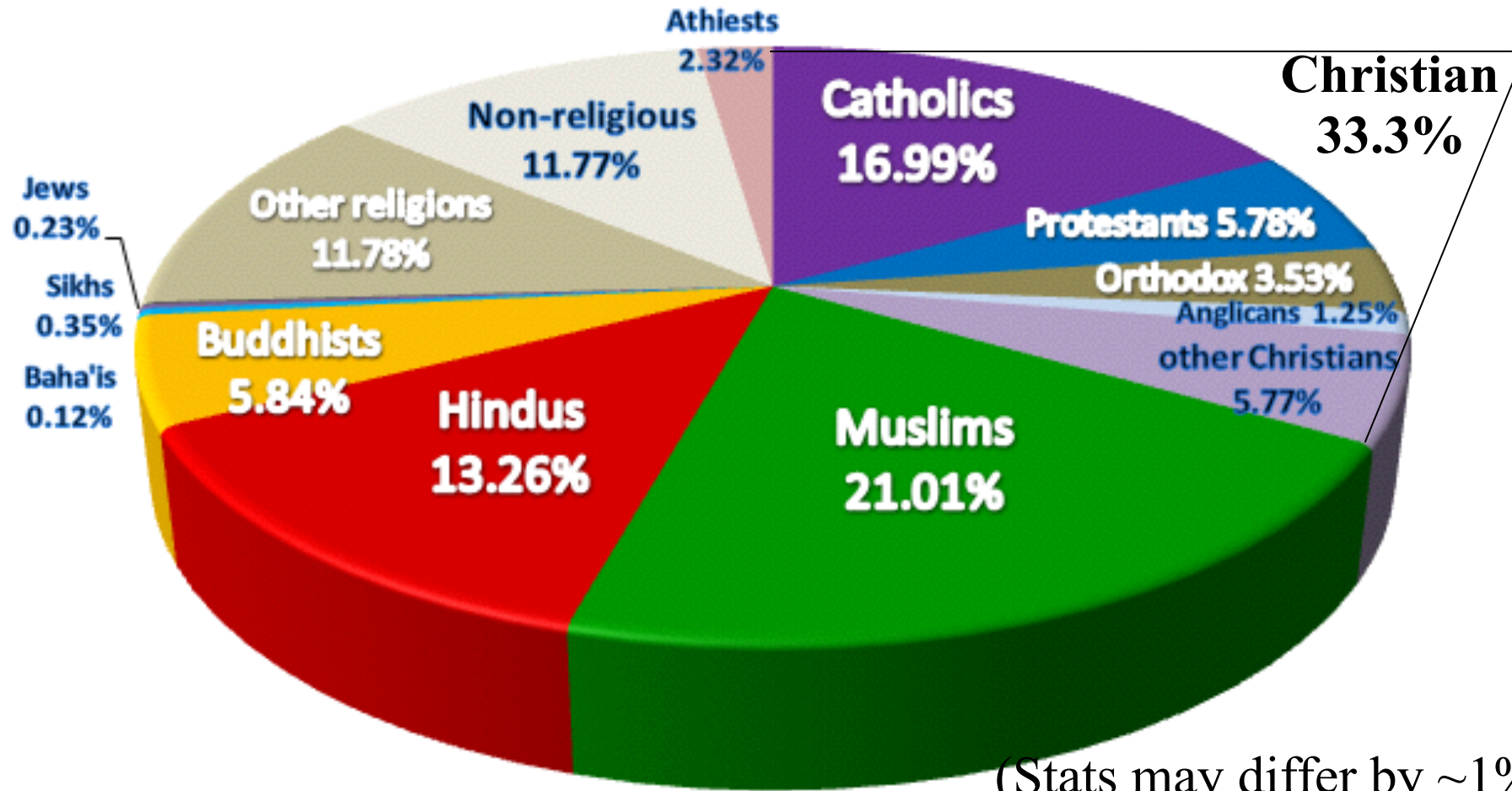
- Only 15% of Muslims are Arabs
- The only Arabic most of them know is limited to the prayers



The top 5 nations with the most Muslims are NOT Arab:

Indonesia  
India  
Pakistan  
Bangladesh  
Nigeria

# World Religions by percentage (2007 est.)



(Stats may differ by ~1%, depending on source)

Together, Christians & Muslims comprise over HALF the population of the world.

The relationship between these two religions has worldwide impact



Muslims: ~1% of U.S. population

- ~25% of U.S. Muslims are African-American

“Nation of Islam” is NOT viewed by most Muslims as part of Islam, though they see themselves that way;  
NOT part of the 25% mentioned above (and tiny in comparison to it)

- ~72% are immigrants or “second generation”  
(mostly since 1965)

- American Muslims (both men and women) generally have a higher education level & earn more than average American
  - Amer. Muslim women hold more college & post-graduate degrees than Amer. Muslim men, and are more likely to work in

"ISLAM" = "submission to God"

"MUSLIM" = "a person who is submitted to God"

"SALAAM" = "peace"

"Islam" = "submission to God,  
which alone brings peace"

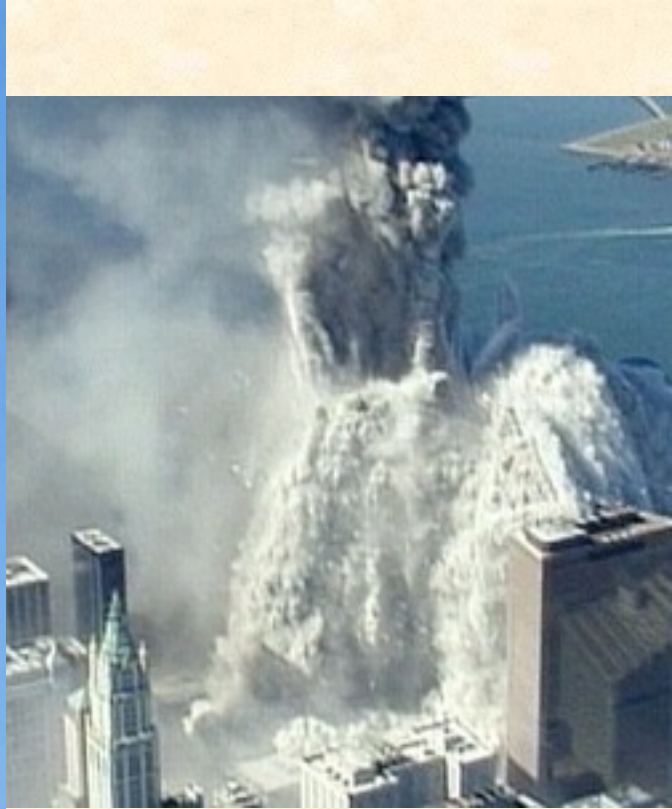
3 adjectives (gen'l speech), that are **NOT** synonyms:

"Muslim" - pertaining to an ethnic and/or religious group

"Islamic" - an essential characteristic of Islam

"Islamist" - a particular, extremist form of Islam





**15 years ago  
TODAY:  
9/11/2001**

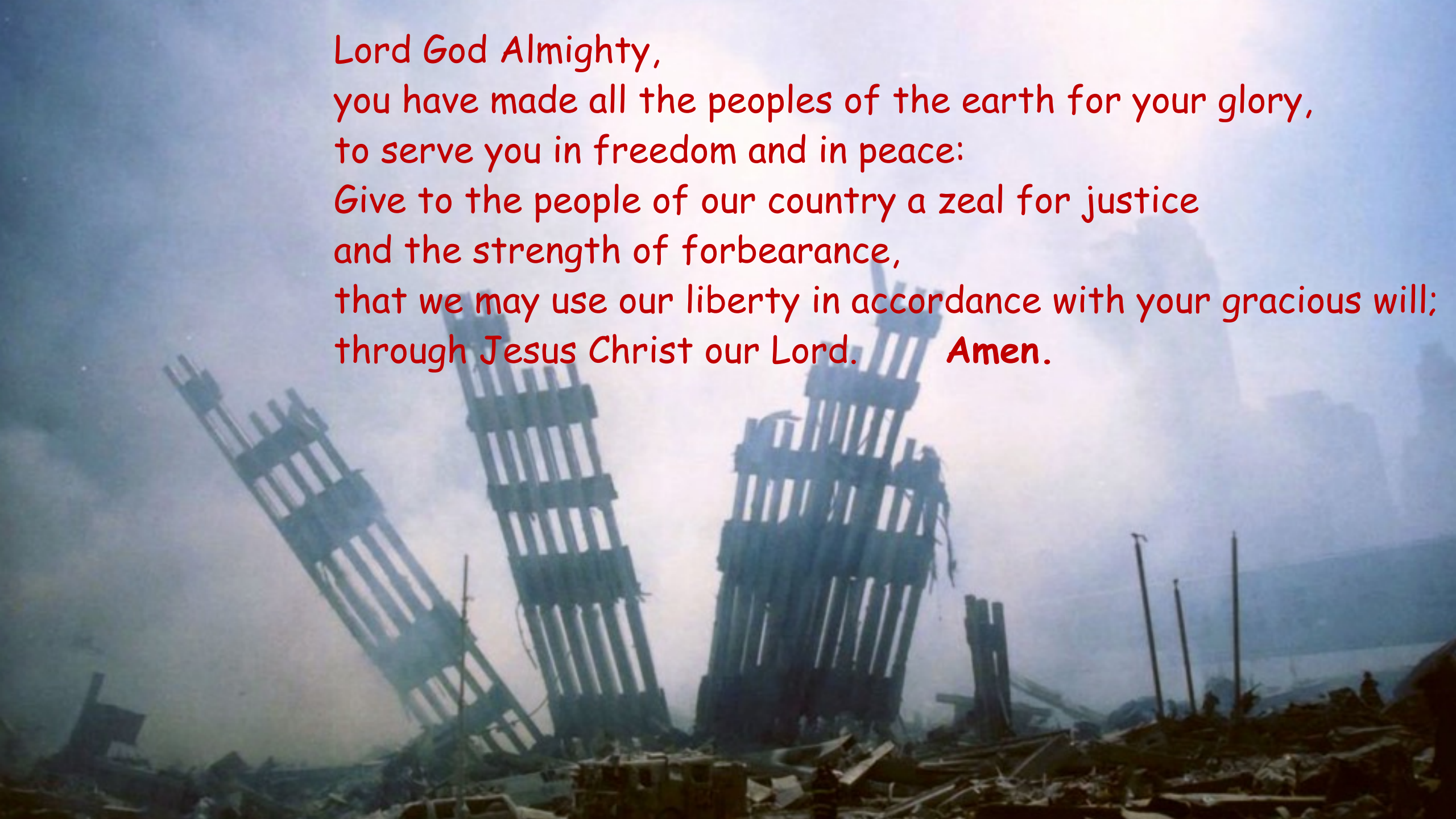




About 3000 died  
at the  
World Trade Center,  
the Pentagon,  
and on  
United Flight 93  
over Pennsylvania, including  
~400 first-responders.

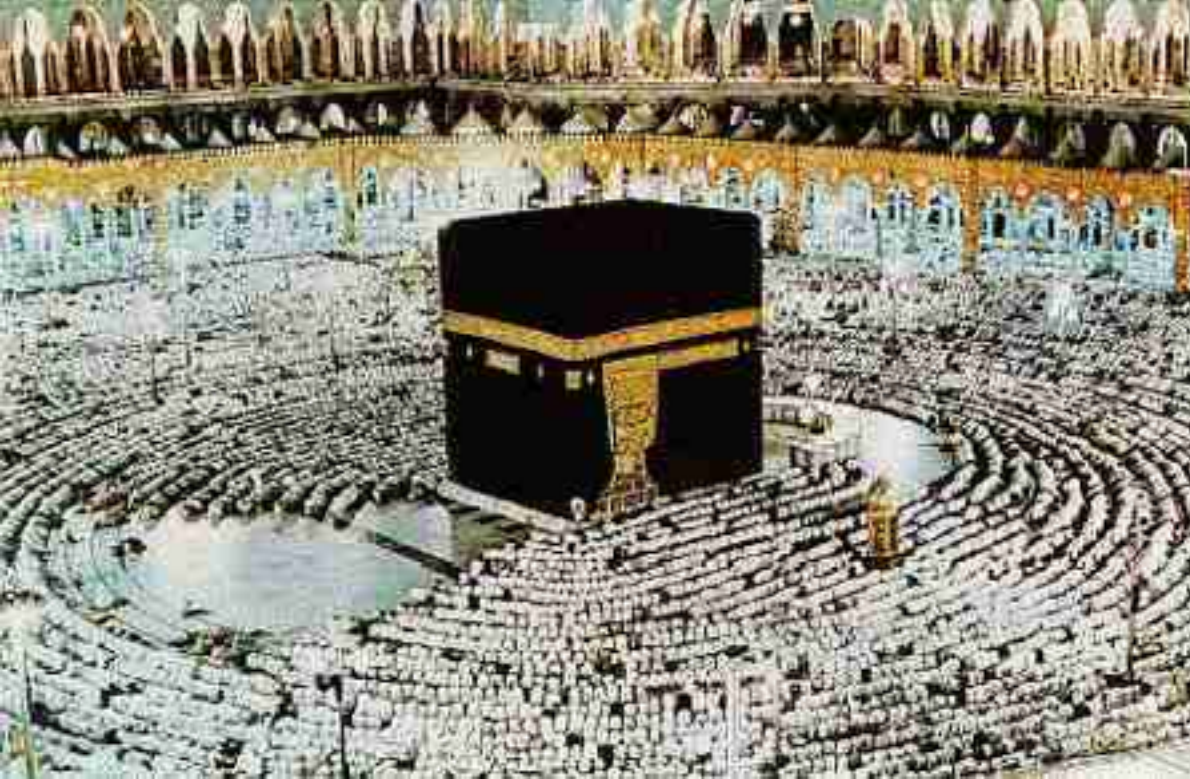




A photograph of a destroyed city, likely after a major disaster. The image shows the skeletal remains of several tall buildings, their steel frames exposed and leaning precariously. The ground is covered in rubble and debris. The sky is overcast and grey, creating a somber and desolate atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image in a red, serif font.

Lord God Almighty,  
you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory,  
to serve you in freedom and in peace:  
Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice  
and the strength of forbearance,  
that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**





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*QUESTIONS  
are welcome  
at any point!*





**"You shall love the Lord your God  
with all your heart, ...soul, ...mind,  
and ...strength."**

(Mark 12:31; cf. Deuteronomy 6:5)

**"You shall love your neighbor  
as yourself."**

(Mark 12:31; Leviticus 19:18)

**"You shall love the alien/stranger  
as yourself."**

(Leviticus 19:34b)

**"You shall  
NOT bear false witness  
against your neighbor."**

(Exodus 20:16)

**"Love your enemies,  
bless those who hate you...."**

(Luke 6:27b)

**A "package deal"**

**Rather Daunting  
Scriptural Expectations**

# "You shall not bear false witness...."

- "We are to fear and love God so that

we do not betray, slander, or lie about our neighbors,

but defend them, speak well of them, and explain their actions in the kindest way."

(Martin Luther)

- John Wesley adds category of "not speaking evil" about our neighbors which involves true items - spoken repeatedly, unnecessarily & out of proportion - which thereby produces evil results.



# Barriers to Understanding Islam

## 1. American sense of violation by "Muslims" on 9/11

- Muslims comprise about 1% of U.S. population
- Muslims comprise about 1% of ~3000 9/11 victims
  - 28 at World Trade Center
  - 3 on two of the planes
  - (numbers do not include any of perpetrators)

Muslim Americans suffered **SAME** proportion of loss that day as did the rest of Americans

"US" vs. "them"

"They" ARE  
"us"!



# Barriers to Understanding Islam

2. Pervasive news stories associating "Muslims" and "violence," implying a "causal link" between the two

If a person from Muslim background shoots someone, the assumption is that there is a "religious" motive.

If a person from Christian background shoots someone, the assumption is that mental illness is involved.

Is "religion" the motive for everything a person does?

In war situations, are roadside bombs expressions of religion? ... or "defense of the homeland"? ... or "patriotism"? ... or "revenge"? ...



# Barriers to Understanding Islam

## 3. Lack of contact with, or knowledge about, Islam or Muslims

How many of you have **Muslim acquaintances, coworkers, friends, relatives?**

How many of you have **ever attended a mosque worship service?**

**When we don't know others, our imaginations fill in the gaps  
-- usually for the WORSE!**

2007 Pew Survey of Americans:

Of those who did not know any Muslims:

32% positive view of Muslims

Of those who did know one or more Muslims:

56% positive view of Muslims

# Barriers to Understanding Islam

4. Tendency to view Islam or Muslims as just ONE thing

We should know better!

All Christians are not the same

All Jews are not the same

All Hindus are not the same

All Buddhists are not the same

All Muslims are not the same





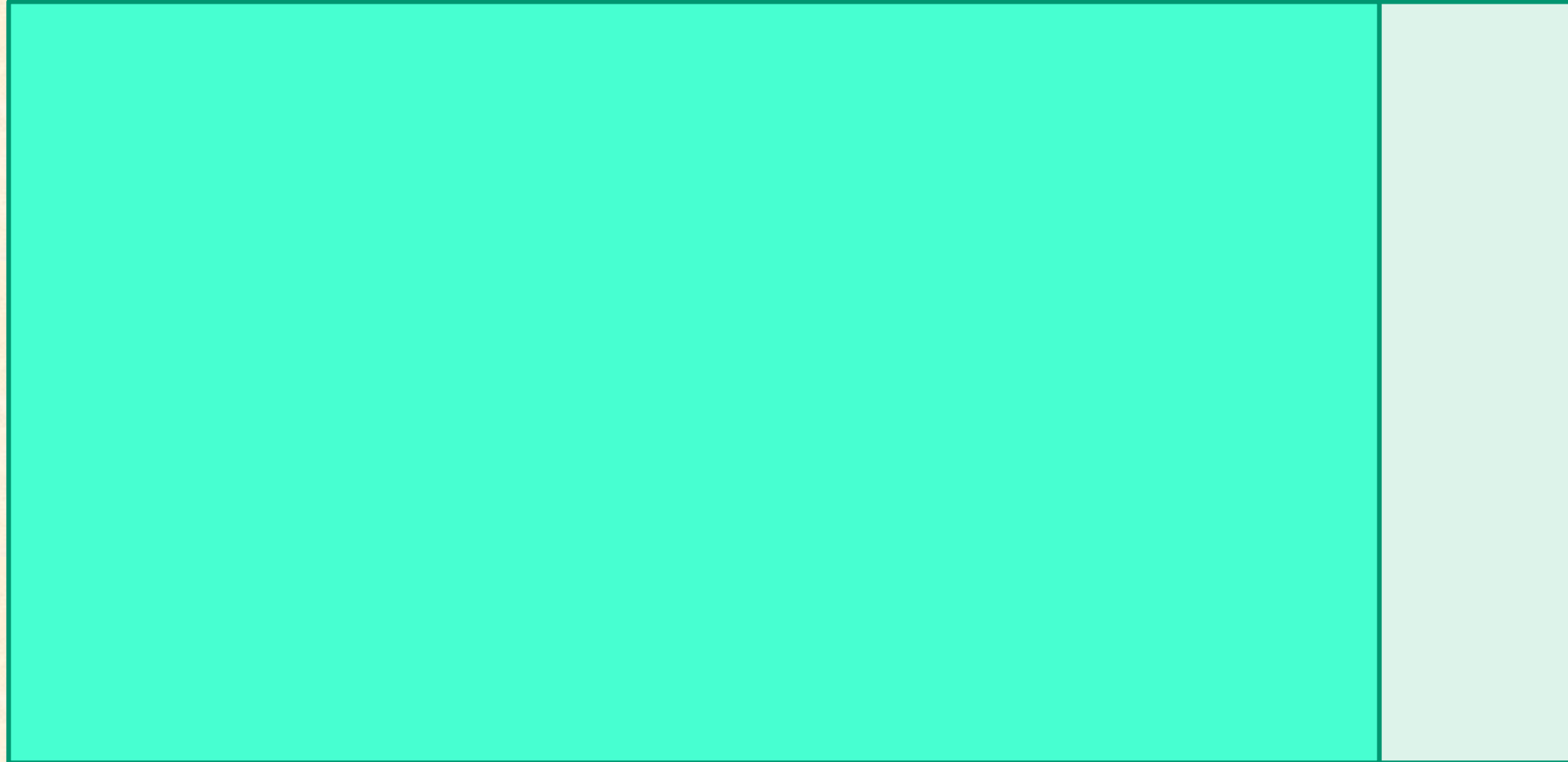
# ISLAM & its diversity??

Sunni

(87-90% worldwide)

Shi'a

(10-13% ww)



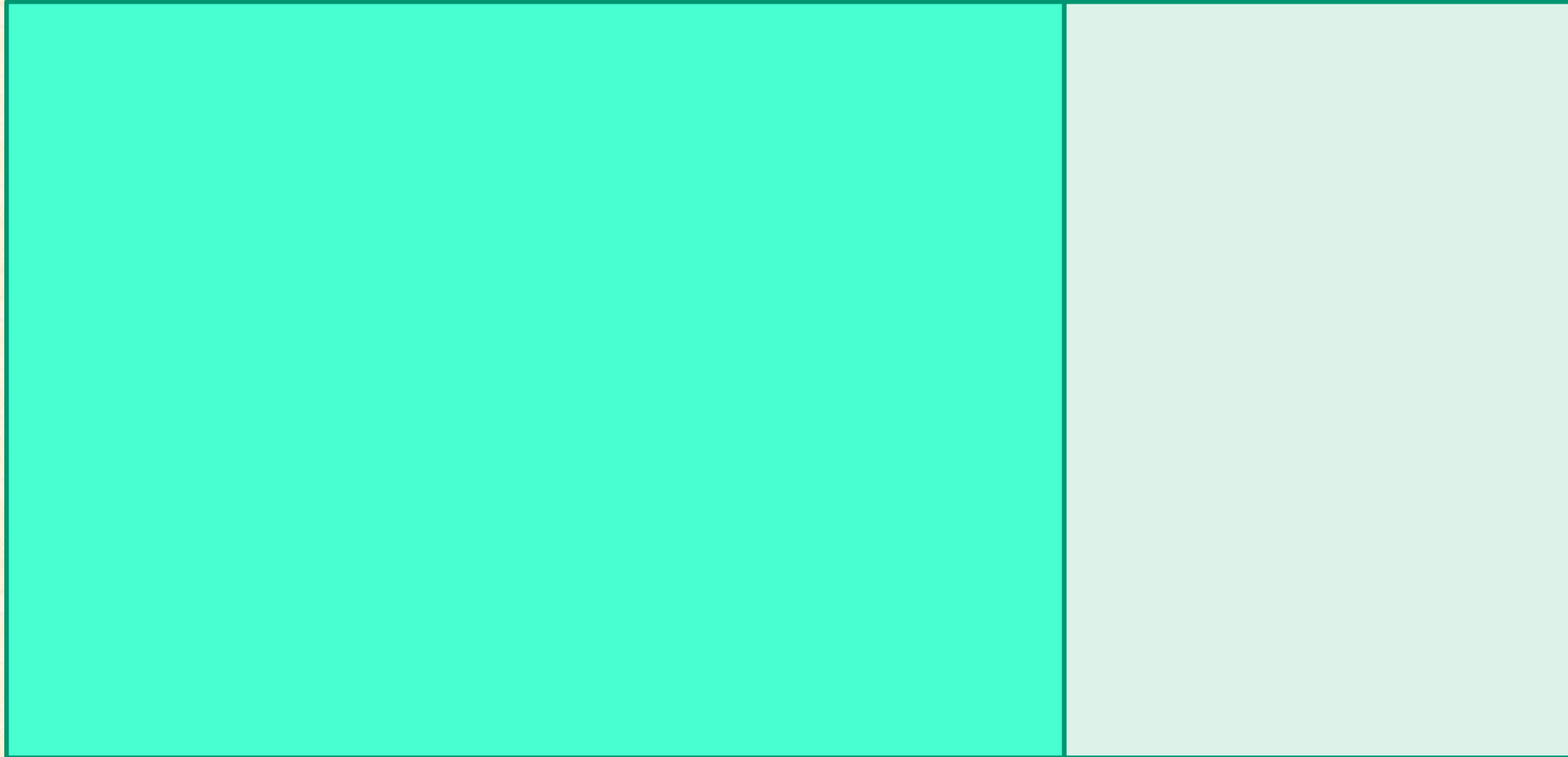
# middle east ISLAM & its diversity

Sunni

(~61% in Middle East)

Shi'a

(~38% in Middle East)

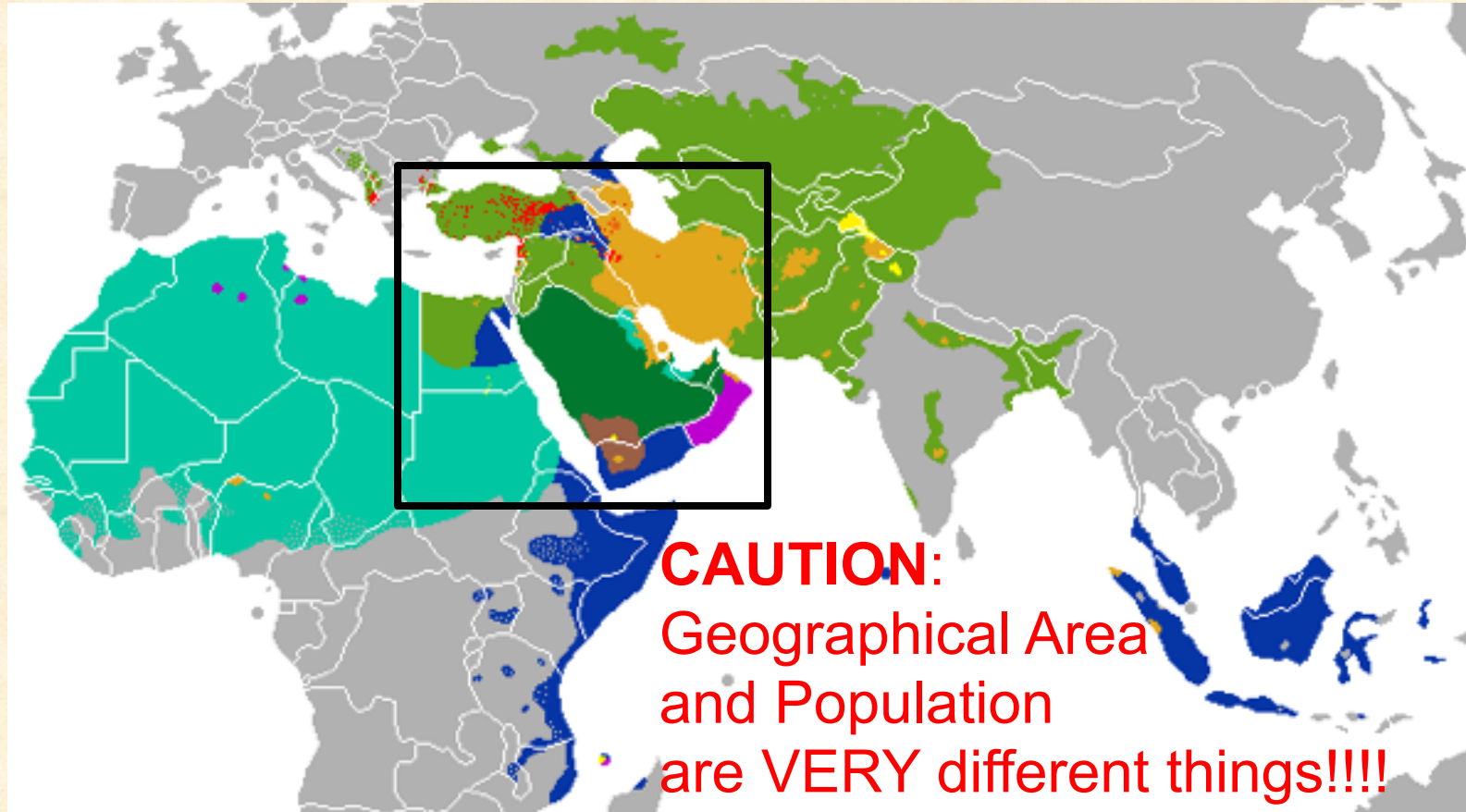




# Muslim Madhabs

(schools of legal thought/approach)

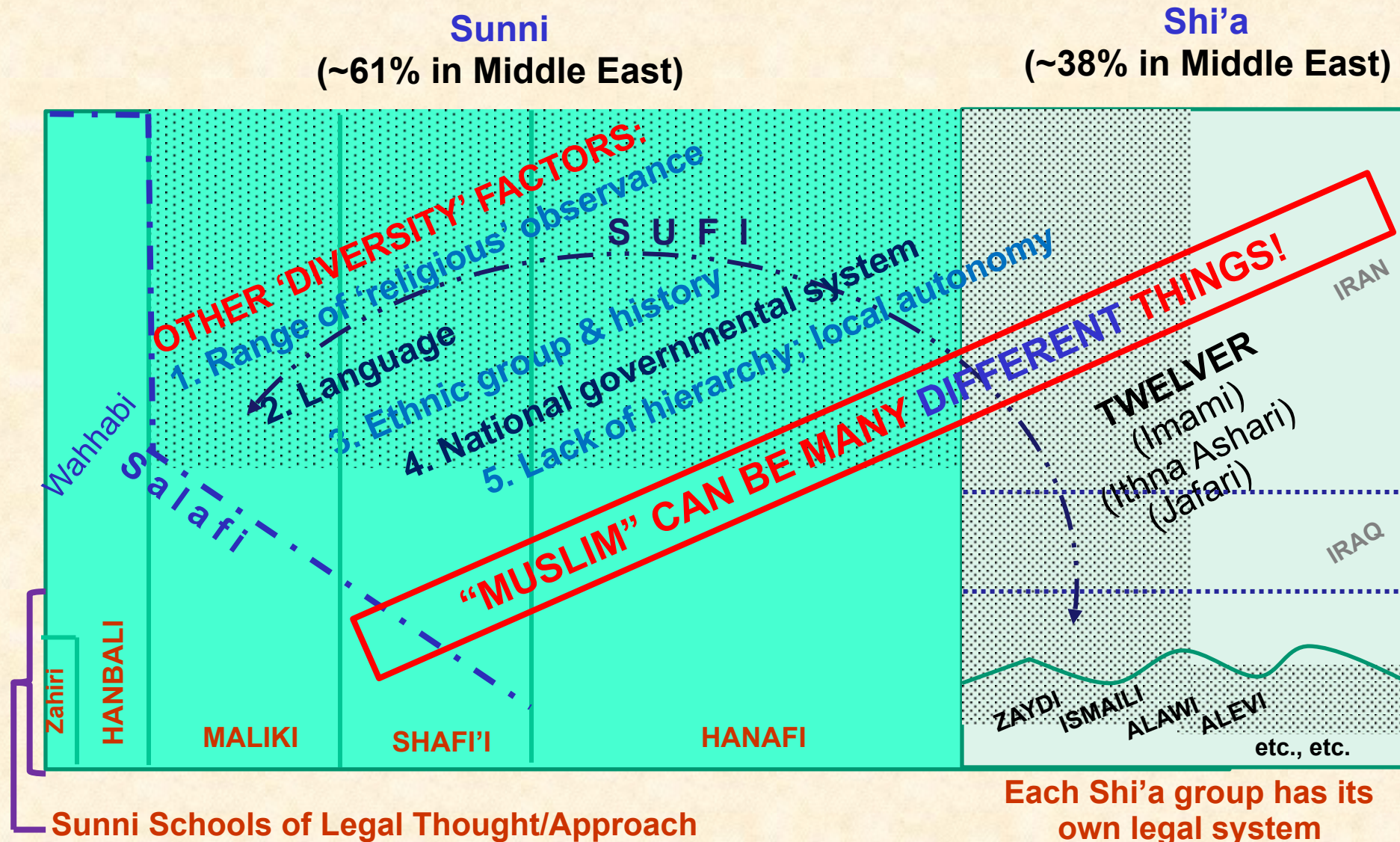
(color = predominant school; others often also present)



**CAUTION:**  
Geographical Area  
and Population  
are VERY different things!!!!

E.g.,...Iraq is 65-70% Shia;  
Iran's population is ~3X  
that of Saudi Arabia

# middle east ISLAM & ITS DIVERSITY





# Five Pillars of Islam (Sunni)

## Five characteristic actions:

1. Shahadah - profession of faith
2. Salat - formal prayer 5x daily
3. Zakat - "donation to the poor"
4. Sawm - fasting during month of Ramadan
5. Hajj - pilgrimage to Mecca once in one's life



# 1: Shahadah: profession of faith

"There is no god but God,  
and Muhammad is the messenger of God."



- "Allah" = "The God"; strict monotheism  
(more about this on the next slide)
- **Closest thing to a universal "creed" in Islam**
- Islam claims EVERY culture has had prophets; traditionally speaks of 124,000 of them
  - All "Messengers" are "Prophets"; all "Prophets" are not "Messengers"
  - "Messenger" brings a Scripture, but "Prophets" don't
  - Mentions / Accepts MANY biblical Prophets - PLUS
- Prophets ALL have same basic message: "Worship/Serve the One God"  
**Muhammad brought NOTHING new!**
- Muhammad is Final Prophet; "seal"



# God

- "Allah" - "the God"
  - Identified as the same God worshipped by Jews & Christians
  - Arabic-speaking Christians also refer to God as "Allah"
- Much less anthropomorphic imagery/language applied to God than among Jews/Christians
  - "99 Names of God"; "Father" is not among them
    - Names are God's Attributes
    - God relates to world by means of "His" Names
  - Beyond imagination or description
    - Unique; Wholly Other; radically transcendent
    - YET, also "closer to us than our own jugular veins"
      - Radically immanent

# God

- Unity / Oneness / Tawhid - THE most important teaching
  - NOT just "enumeration"/counting; **UNIQUENESS**
  - EVERYTHING "comes together" in God
    - Apart from God, NOTHING "comes together"
    - Oneness of God is the basis for the oneness of Reality
  - Submission ("islam") of the whole self to God is the ONLY appropriate response to God
    - It's the only response that deals with God as "God"!
  - This is the heart of ALL authentic religion;  
**islam is wider than Islam!**
    - islam is viewed as the primordial religion of humanity - and the final religion!
    - "True Religion, in God's eyes, is submission (islam)"



# "People of the Book"

- Jews and Christians not expected to "revert" (i.e., convert) to Islam - no need to!
- "Do not argue with the people of the Book, unless in a fair way, apart from those who act wrongly, and say to them: 'We believe what has been sent down to us, and we believe what has been sent down to you. Our God and your God is one, and to Him we submit.'" (29:46)

## "People of the Book"

- "All those who believe, and the Jews and the Sabians and the Christians, in fact any one who believes in God and the Last Day, and performs good deeds, will have nothing to fear or regret [on the Day of Judgment]." (5:69)
- "There is no compulsion in religion." (2:256)





## 2. Salat: Prayer 5x daily

- During specified periods
- Must be in state of ritual purification
- Facing Mecca





- Includes prescribed movements, Qur'an recitations and prayers
- Other prayers are also used



- Friday early afternoon prayer is as a group
  - Expected for males; optional for females



### 3. Zakat: "donation to the poor"

- Approximately 2.5% of one's net worth (not income!)
  - Different rates applies to different types of items
- Related to intense concern for justice
- Collected as a separate "tax"  
in many Muslim-majority countries;  
in U.S., individual donation
  - NOT part of support of mosque

## 4. Sawm - Fasting during month of Ramadan

- No food, liquid, sex, cigarettes during daylight hours
- Festive breaking of fast (iftar) after sundown
- Month in which Qur'an first began to be revealed
- Emphasis on discipline and identification with the poor; NOT penitential
- Because of lunar calendar, Ramadan begins ~11 days earlier each year, thus moving throughout year
- Eid al-Fitr = festival of "breaking the fast" at conclusion of Ramadan



# 5. Hajj: pilgrimage to Mecca

Occurring **RIGHT NOW!**;  
1.5+ million people



- Once in a lifetime, circumstances (e.g., health, finances) permitting
- No indicators of status permitted
- **Sunni and Shi'a together**
- Must occur during the month of the Hajj
- Main festival:  
**Eid al-Adha**, Festival of the Sacrifice



# Five Pillars of Islam

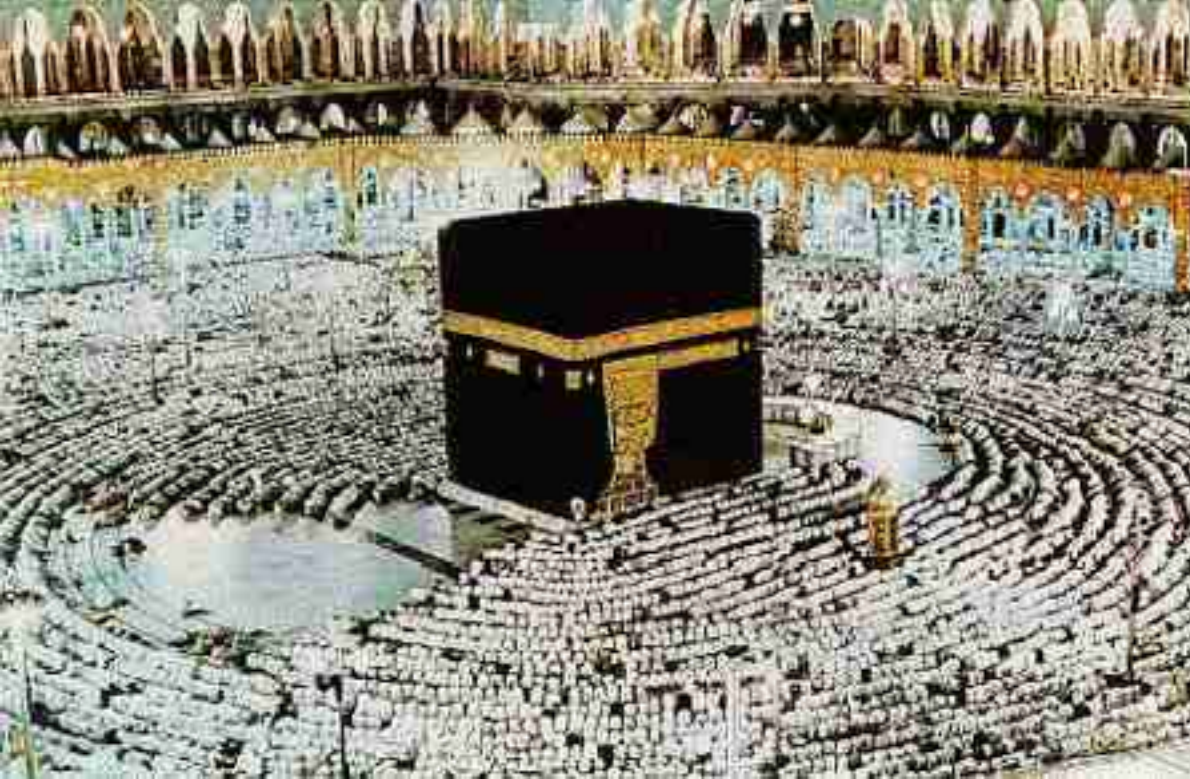
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Muslims have as mixed and diverse a record of 'observance' as Christians do!





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9/11: Barriers in Understanding our  
Muslim Neighbors

9/18: Encountering the Qur'an as  
Word of God

9/25: Shari'a: Living God's Values

**10/2: NO CLASS**

10/9: Violence in the Name of God?

10/16: Jesus in Muslim Understanding

10/23: Muslim & Christian Theologies  
in Conversation

